

The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

BULLETIN SEVENTY-NINE

SPRING, 1962

THE CENTENNIAL OF THOREAU'S DEATH WH

The Thoreau Society's commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the death of Thoreau was held in New York City on the week-end of May 5th and 6th, 1962. The meetings opened in the Pierpont Morgan Library at 10 a.m., with papers being read by Carl F. Hovde on "The Treatment of Character in A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS," by Joseph Moldenhauer on "WALDEN: The Strategy of Paradox," and Walter Harding on "The Last Days of Henry David Thoreau."

Luncheon was served at noon in the Community Church. The menu included "Boeuf a la mode Supérieure de Woodchuck, Sudbury Meadow Rice, Walden Beans, Heywood's Meadow Cranberry Sauce, Hosmer Corn Bread, Apple Pan Dowdy (from Mrs. Alcott's Recipe), Deacon Wood's Cider, Water from Bristow's Spring, Emersonian Popped Corn, and Nuts." Raymond Adams read an after-dinner paper on "The Day Thoreau Didn't Die."

At the afternoon session in the Morgan Library, J. Lyndon Shanley read a paper on "Thoreau: Years of Disappointment and Decay?", Reginald L. Cook on "A Parable of Parablists," and Dugald Semple on "Thoreau in the World Today." At the evening session at Community Church, Leonard Kleinfeld read greetings from Thoreauvians in Argentina, Japan, Spain, France, Uruguay, Australia, Norway, and England and Howard Mumford Jones read a paper on "Thoreau Reconsidered."

An exhibition of the Morgan Library Thoreau manuscripts, including the complete journals, was on display at a reception sponsored by the Morgan Library in the later afternoon.

On Sunday morning the Rev. Donald S. Harrington preached on "Living Is So Dear" in the Community Church and the members of the Thoreau Society sat together in a body.

In the afternoon at the Library of New York University on University Heights the Hall of Fame of Great Americans conducted its dedication of the bust of Henry David Thoreau by Malvina Hoffman. The invocation was by Rev. John W. Brigham, greetings by President James M. Hester of New York University, response by Rev. Ralph W. Sockman, director of the Hall of Fame, presentation of the bust by Walter Harding, unveiling of the bust by Mrs. Herbert Hosmer and Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, tribute to Thoreau by Raymond Adams, appreciations by Lewis Leary, T. L. Bailey, Howard Mumford Jones, and Paul Oehser, and an address by His Excellency Mr. Braj Kumar Nehru, ambassador to the United States from India. The meeting was followed by a reception for the speakers and guests. The hall and the reception room were decorated with wild flowers gathered in

IF THIS PARAGRAPH IS CHECKED IN RED, YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE. RENEWAL, \$2.00. LIFE MEMBERSHIP, \$25.00. DUES SHOULD BE SENT TO THE SECRETARY, WALTER HARDING, STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, GENESEO, NEW YORK

Concord by Mrs. Edmund Fenn and brought to New York City by Mrs. Charles MacPherson.

A beautifully printed program of the meetings was generously donated by Mr. C. Waller Barrett and copies are being mailed out to all members as a supplement to this bulletin.

The Pierpont Morgan Library presented to all guests at the Saturday meetings an equally beautifully printed booklet, A SPRIG OF ANDROMEDA: A LETTER FROM LOUISA MAY ALCOTT ON THE DEATH OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU. And Mr. Norman H. Strouse presented copies of Thoreau's hitherto unpublished poem SIC VITA!, printed in a limited edition on his private Silverado Press. A special illustrated program of the Hall of Fame ceremonies was designed by Milton Meltzer to coordinate with the general program.

Among the greetings read at the Hall of Fame ceremonies was a telegram to Dr. Sockman which read, "I am delighted to send a word of greeting to all those gathered in New York Sunday for the unveiling of the bust of Henry David Thoreau in the Hall of Fame. It is most appropriate that the ceremony occur on the 100th anniversary of Thoreau's death. Your selection of Ambassador Nehru as the principal speaker reflects Thoreau's pervasive and universal influence on social thinking and political action. With all best wishes. John F. Kennedy."

A special feature of the meetings was an exhibition in the foyer of the Morgan Library of a large number of Japanese books on Thoreau and translations of his works into Japanese. This exhibition was planned and arranged by the American Literary Society of Japan and the contents of the exhibition have been presented to the Thoreau Society for its archives in the Concord Free Public Library. A bibliography of Thoreau in Japan has been prepared by Miss Akiko Tokuzza and will be published by the Thoreau Society. The books will be exhibited in the Concord library at the time of the annual meeting in July. A cablegram to Mr. Leary was read at the meeting, saying, "Congratulations on Thoreau Centenary from AmLit Society Japan Saburo Yamaya."

An account of the New York City meetings taken from the NEW YORK TIMES for May 7, 1962, follows:

CITY AND CONCORD SALUTE THOREAU

Hall of Fame Unveils Bust
a Century After Death

The hundredth anniversary of the death of Henry David Thoreau, America's faithful "self-appointed inspector of snowstorms and rainstorms," was commemorated here and in the place of his birth yesterday.

The events here included the unveiling of a bronze bust of Thoreau at the Hall of Fame for Great Americans in the Bronx, a sermon on the writer by the Rev. Donald S. Harrington at the Community Church

of New York, and the first reading of a previously unpublished Thoreau poem.

In Concord, Mass., where Thoreau was born in 1817 and where he died on May 6, 1862, schoolchildren paraded from his home to the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.

A great-great-grandchild of Ralph Waldo Emerson read excerpts from Emerson's funeral oration and the children put wildflowers on Thoreau's grave.

The day's events were the culmination of a week-end of commemoration here. On Saturday Thoreau scholars from over the world had gathered in the Pierpont Morgan Library on Thirty-sixth Street to hear papers on aspects of the poet and philosopher's career. The library is exhibiting Thoreau memorabilia.

Envoy Cltes Effect on Gandhi

B. K. Nehru, India's Ambassador to the United States, delivered the principal address at the Hall of Fame on New York University's Bronx campus yesterday. The benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Arthur J. Brown, 106 years old, who is the senior member of the Hall of Fame's college of electors.

Thoreau was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1960, along with Thomas Alva Edison and Edward Alexander MacDowell. His is the eighty-eighth bust to be placed in the open-air colonnade on a hilltop overlooking the Hudson and Harlem Rivers.

In his speech yesterday Ambassador Nehru recalled that Thoreau's philosophy had had

"the profoundest effect on Mahatma Gandhi, the maker of modern India, and is consequently today one of the elements that make up our national consciousness."

The message of Thoreau is valuable to the "one-third of humanity that has not yet made the final choice as to what kind of society it is going to have," the Ambassador said. "It can serve to remind them that what is invaluable is in the last resort the individual."

Revulsion at Today's World

In his sermon Mr. Harrington said that if Thoreau could speak today he would be "appalled at the mechanized and dehumanized life of man, and nauseated at what man will do to earn a living."

Mr. Harrington said that in Thoreau's stay of two years and two months beside Concord's Walden Pond he had "dared to defy the conventional expectation of him, dared to stand alone."

It was in "Walden, or Life in the Woods," published in 1854, that Thoreau said: "I was self-appointed inspector of snow-storms, and did my duty faithfully."

Mr. Harrington also read for the first time an early poem by Thoreau, the manuscript of which was purchased at the Parke-Bernet Galleries last fall. The poem was especially printed for the commemoration by Norman H. Strouse, president of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency and an admirer of Thoreau.

event. Soon the assembled devotees of Henry David Thoreau numbered around two hundred and fifty including about 50 children.

The speakers and flutist were introduced by Mr. Robert Needham, a Concord resident whose historical interest in the town includes a deep appreciation of Thoreau. With a firm voice and clear diction, reminiscent of her great aunt Ellen Emerson, today's Ellen Emerson read several lines from Ralph Waldo Emerson's Thoreau eulogy. Her poised presence and charming youth were loved and deeply appreciated by every one of the many older members of Concord who were present.

Mr. Gatos then played a haunting little piece on his flute, known as "The Syrinx," which had Henry walking before our very eyes through Walden Wood, playing his brother's cherished flute which now is treasured in the Concord Antiquarian Society.

By then it was three o'clock. Mr. Needham reminded the assembled throng that in New York City, at that very moment, several hundred people assembled there were being told of the Concord folks gathered, with their garden flowers, around the Thoreau family graves, and that in a moment or two the bust of Henry David Thoreau would be unveiled in the Hall of Fame. He added that, though this ceremony in Sleepy Hollow was more appropriate from Henry's point of view, it was fitting and right that Henry should stand represented among the rest of his famous countrymen.

Mr. Needham then introduced Mr. Fritz Kussin, a direct descendant of Bronson Alcott, and resident of Concord. Mr. Kussin read two selections from Alcott's Sonnets, which Bronson Alcott had addressed to Henry Thoreau. He spoke in a spirited manner which, added to the picture Ellen Emerson had presented to the gathering, seemed to bring to life the man he was describing.

At the close of Mr. Kussin's reading Mr. Needham called for a long, serious moment of silence while everyone devoted his thoughts to remembering many of the thoughts which Henry had said and done in his lifetime which brought him the honor being done him this day. Then all of the flower offerings were laid on Henry's grave or in front of the family stone.

While the crowd was dispersing some of the flowers were shared with six of Henry's walking companions, all buried nearby,

- Hawthorne, Bronson and Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ellery Channing and Franklin B. Sanborn. An andromeda wreath, made and carried by Mrs.

Edmund Fenn, was placed at the foot of the Thoreau family tombstone. The rhodora, carried by Mrs. Fenn and Mr. and Mrs. Litchfield of Weston, was placed on the grave of Ralph Waldo Emerson in memory of his famous poem of that name. Mrs. Fenn added cedar to the Hawthorne bouquet, to symbolize the hedge of cedar which the Hawthorne family had originally placed around their plot but which has long since disappeared through the depredations of souvenir hunters. Apple blossoms were laid against Alcott's headstone, a mixed bouquet, taken directly off Henry's grave, was placed by the headstone of Frank Sanborn, and another on the grave of Ellery Channing. Thus through the long memory of a hundred years were linked together again the old Sunday Sauntering Association.

Among the flowers left on Sleepy Hollow soil, in addition to those already mentioned, were three sprigs of wild apple placed against Henry's stone, wind anemone, wild lily of the valley, cowslip, forsythia, shadblow, apple blossoms, crabapple, tulips, grape hyacinth, pear blossoms, pansies, daffodils, and jonquils. One man brought an arranged rustic basket containing 22 different native plants, including a clump of unfolding bronze-red maple leaves.

After the cemetery service several members of the Thoreau Society met at the cairn at Walden Pond. Mr. Edwin Procter, of Northboro, read a paper he had written about 20 years ago, describing his first sight of Walden Pond and the cairn. As he was reading the rain, which had been threatening all afternoon, came splashing down through the trees. A devoted pilgrim and his wife, both of whom had walked to Walden from Woodstock, New York, taking two weeks to get here for the centennial of Thoreau's death, had spend the day at the pond. The pilgrim, a bearded gentleman looking not too unlike Henry himself in his last few years, carried with him a century-old bugle. When he was asked to play something appropriate before leaving he quietly, with delicate restraint and feeling, with perfect note control, played John Brown's Body, a most fitting end to a memory-drenched day.

Mary Sherwood

As the NEW YORK TIMES points out above, there was also a commemoration ceremony in Concord on Sunday May 6th. And let us turn to Mary Sherwood's article in the CONCORD JOURNAL for May 10th for an account of that ceremony:

THOREAU'S CONCORD CENTENNIAL

The May Sixth centennial flower procession in memory of Henry David Thoreau was an inspiring and satisfying sight for those who participated in it and witnessed it. About sixty people began the parade at the Thoreau Main Street House, where Henry died a hundred years ago that morning. The procession developed informally, people walking in twos and threes along the sidewalk to the library. As the group moved onto and across the Milldam many people, violets and other flowers in hand, who had been waiting for the parade, joined the walkers, building the group up to about eighty.

Just as the procession moved through the gate in back of Wright's Tavern and headed toward the front of the First Parish Meeting House, a member of that church, Mr. Charles Leonard, who was watching through a small window below the bell deck at the base of the steeple, began to toll the bell. The soft, slow gong spoke gently of the great yet humble man who was born of this community.

The flower bearers moved around the church driveway arc and crossed Lexington Road to Bedford Street, picking up more flower-bearing recruits along the way. By the time the procession entered the first gate of Sleepy

Hollow Cemetery, where a stop was made to put a few flowers on the grave of Henry's Aunt Sophia Dunbar, in the plot where Henry was originally buried, the assemblage had grown to about one hundred and twenty-five people.

Here, Mr. Harry Gatos of Lexington, led the procession with his flute, playing a sonata by Bach, in order to follow the exact historical route over which Henry's remains were carried from the old cemetery to Sleepy Hollow it would have been necessary for the parade to remain out in Bedford street and enter the lower gate. Because of the heavy traffic on the road on Sundays, the procession remained inside the present cemetery bounds, since all of the land now belongs to Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.

The exact date of the removal of Henry, his brother John, his sister Helen and his father to Author's Ridge is not known, but it took place before his sister Sophia died, and very probably before his mother's death in 1872. Today the entire family is on the ridge overlooking Sleepy Hollow, the very part of the new cemetery which Henry surveyed for the Town of Concord.

A great many more of Henry's modern-day friends were at the top of the ridge, suddenly visible to those in the procession as the latter moved around the Hollow, standing up there tall and waiting to become a part of the

And then on Friday, May 11th another ceremony was held in Washington, D.C. For an account of that meeting, let us turn to the WASHINGTON POST of May 12th and an article by Dorothy Butler:

Thoreau's Death Marked in Woods

A group of eminent Americans went to the green woods yesterday to pay tribute to a simple lover of nature.

"This is a place Thoreau would have loved. It's just like a picnic place," Robert Frost said to Louis Untermeyer as they strode along a birch-shaded stretch of path in Dumbarton Oaks Park.

Earlier, Untermeyer had whispered: "I think Thoreau would have been a bit staggered by the beauty and magnificence of it."

The occasion was a ceremony marking the death of Thoreau in his Concord home a hundred years ago this week.

The ceremony was a project of Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall and the Wilderness Society of Washington.

Frost told some 100 persons gathered in the parks woodland meadow:

"Whenever I'm weary of considering, and I can stand things no longer, I always say: Give me the woods. I've al-

ways wanted to be . . . lost in the woods."

He called Thoreau's slim volume, "Walden," one of America's greatest storybooks. "It has everything," he said.

Another Thoreauvian, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas brought along Chief Justice of the United States Earl Warren.

Thoreau, who built himself a hut in the woods and lived happily in it on a weekly budget of 27 cents, would be "alarmed at America's present trend toward conformity," said the Justice. He did not think like the crowd . . . But he knew the quiet desperation in which most people live their lives.

But despite Thoreau's frequent preachments of the virtue of ridding one's life of complexities, he would have been "flattered," that the "great of the Nation" had penetrated the woods to honor his memory, said Untermeyer, consultant-in-poetry at the Library of Congress.

"You see, he was kind of an off-stage statesman," he said.

Other accounts of the meetings appeared in the NEW YORK TIMES for May 1, 1962 and for May 13, 1962; the CHICAGO TRIBUNE for May 7 and May 6; the BOSTON HERALD for May 5 and May 7; the NEWS-TRIBUNE for May 4; the NEW YORK POST for May 6; the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE for May 6 and May 7; and the Concord JOURNAL for April 12 and May 10. Your secretary would be grateful to learn of any other news accounts.

THE 1962 ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the Thoreau Society will be held in the First Parish Church in Concord on Saturday July 14th, beginning at 10:30 in the morning. Included on the program will be an address by the president, Lewis Leary, and a panel discussion led by Van Burd on the topic "Born Again on the Road: Thoreau as Traveler." A buffet luncheon will be served at noon. Reservations for the luncheon may be sent to Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, 22 Elm Street, Concord. In the afternoon excursions will be conducted to Walden Pond, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery and Second Division.

THE ANNUAL ELECTION.

The nominating committee has submitted the following slate of officers to be voted on at the annual meeting. For terms of office of one year: Theodore L. Bailey, president; Walter Harding, president-elect; Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, vice-president; and Walter Harding, secretary-treasurer. For three-year terms on the executive committee: Mrs. Caleb Wheeler and George Rady.

THE WESTERN REGIONAL THOREAU CENTENNIAL

A Western Regional Thoreau Centennial, sponsored jointly by the Thoreau Society and Utah State University, will be held at the State University in Logan on June 20, 21, 22, and 23. J. Golden Taylor will speak on "Thoreau and the Integrity of the Individual" and "Thoreau and the Un-Common Man." Walter Harding will speak on "The Influence of Civil Disobedience," "Five Ways of Looking at WALDEN," and "The Last Days of Henry David Thoreau!"

These meetings are open to the general public and members of the Thoreau Society are particularly invited to attend. Other speakers, not yet announced, are to be on the program. For details of the meetings, write Prof. J. Golden Taylor, English Department, Utah State University, Logan.

THOREAU SOCIETY BOOKLET 16

Recently mailed to all members of the Thoreau Society was Thoreau Society Booklet 16: THOREAU'S MINNESOTA JOURNEY: TWO DOCUMENTS: THOREAU'S NOTES ON THE JOURNEY WEST AND THE LETTERS OF HORACE MANN, JR., edited by Walter Harding. The cost of printing this booklet was underwritten by the life memberships of Milton Meltzer of New York City; Miss Elsa Denis of Montreal; John L. Holman Jr. of Cambridge, Mass.; Daniel J. Bernstein of Scarsdale, N.Y.; Carl Bode of College Park, Md.; Helen F. Durre of Cleveland, Ohio; and J. Golden Taylor of Logan, Utah. The cost of printing Bulletin 79 was underwritten by the life membership of Elias S. Wilentz of Brooklyn, New York. Annual membership in the Thoreau Society is two dollars; life membership, twenty-five dollars. The Thoreau Society Inc. is an informal organization of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Officers include Lewis Leary, Columbia University, New York City, president; Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, Concord, Mass., vice-president; T.L. Bailey, Cleveland, Ohio, president-elect; and Walter Harding, Geneseo, New York, secretary-treasurer. Communications concerning the publications of the society should be addressed to the secretary at State University College, Geneseo, New York.

BACK NUMBERS

The following back number bulletins are available from the secretary at fifty cents each: 11-16, 18, 20-24, 29, 32, 36-38, 41-43, 45-48, 52, 54, 57, 60-78. The following back number booklets are available at fifty cents each: 3, 5, 8, 14, 15. And the following back number booklets are available at \$1.00 each: 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13. A reprint of Bulletins 1-9 is available as a pamphlet for fifty cents.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THOREAU

Because of the frequent requests for photographs of Thoreau, we have prepared 5" x 7" glossy prints of the Rowse crayon drawing of Thoreau, the Maxham daguerreotype, the Dunshee ambrotype, and the Ricketson caricature of December 25, 1854. These are available from the secretary at fifty cents each.

THE HOFFMAN BUST OF THOREAU

Contrary to earlier announcements, the miniature busts and medallions of Miss Malvina Hoffman's bust of Thoreau were not available at the ceremonies at New York University on May 6th. If and when they become available, announcement will be made in this bulletin.

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY WH

(We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin. Please keep the secretary informed of new items as they appear or of

- items he has missed. R.Adams, T.Bailey, M.Campbell, G.Davenport, F.Davidson, R.Dickens, E.Engelhardt, H. Gottschalk, G.Hosmer, C.Hoagland, A.Kovar, L.Leary, G.Megathlin, J.Moldenhauer, J.Morine, R.Mostek, C.Nesjar, W.Peterson, R.Poland, W.Powell, L.Richardson, G. Rideout, G.Rady, R.Robbins, H.Schroeder, M.Swallier, W. Spofford, H.Schon, P.Weidemann, S.Wellman, H.West, P.Williams, and E. Denis.
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